

Biden says he's helped lower inflation as he hosts first meeting of his new supply chain council

By Josh Boak
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday opened the first meeting of his supply chain resilience council by warning companies against price gouging and saying that his administration was working to lower costs for U.S. families.

"We know that prices are still too high for too many things, that times are still too tough for too many families," Biden said. "But we've made progress."

The president has blamed inflation on issues such as supply chains and Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, while Republican lawmakers say the run-up in prices was triggered by the \$1.9 trillion in coronavirus relief that Democrat Biden signed into law in 2021.

Biden used the council meeting to announce 30 actions to improve access to medicine and needed economic data as well as other programs tied to the production and shipment of goods.



President Joe Biden speaks about supply chain issues in the Indian Treaty Room on the White House complex, Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)
Page 2

Continued on Page 2



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Continued from Front

He said he was tackling "junk fees," hidden charges that companies sneak into bills just because they can and customers have no alternative.

The council follows an earlier task force that was meant to address the supply chain problems that partially fueled higher inflation in 2021 as the United States recovered from the coronavirus pandemic.

Inflation remains a sore point for Biden's approval ratings ahead of next year's presidential election. After the annualized increase in the consumer price index peaked at 9.1% in June 2022, inflation has eased to a moderate 3.2%. The slowdown has not so far improved U.S. adults' feelings about the economy.

Biden said GOP policies would leave supply chains vulnerable, claiming that Republicans want to cut investments he has made



President Joe Biden speaks about supply chain issues in the Indian Treaty Room on the White House complex, Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

in infrastructure and advanced manufacturing. The president also said companies that are taking advantage of inflation to boost profits are "price gouging." Among the 30

new actions, Biden will use the Defense Production Act to have the Health and Human Services Department invest in the domestic manufacturing of needed medicines that

are deemed crucial for national security. The Cabinet agency has identified \$35 million to invest in the production of materials for injectable medicines.

The federal government

will also improve its ability to monitor supply chains through the sharing of data among agencies. The Commerce Department has developed new tools to assess risks to the supply chain and has partnered with the Energy Department on the supply of renewable energy resources. Shipping companies are beginning to use new data resources from the Transportation Department on freight logistics. The supply chain group is co-chaired by Lael Brainard, the White House National Economic Council director, and Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser. Other members include heads of Cabinet departments, the U.S. trade representative, the chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers and the directors of National Intelligence, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. □

Deck the White House halls: Jill Biden wants holiday visitors to feel like kids again



Holiday decorations adorn the Grand Foyer of the White House for the 2023 theme "Magic, Wonder, and Joy," Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

By Darlene Superville
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Step inside the White House during the holidays by walking beneath the branches of a Christmas tree. Stroll along a hallway decorated with oversized holiday candy and other sweets. See Santa's

sleigh and his eight reindeer suspended above the grand foyer in dramatic fashion. Jill Biden wants everyone who visits the White House during the holidays to feel like a kid again.

"Each room is designed to capture this pure, unfiltered delight and imagination" so

visitors "see this time of year through the wondrous, sparkling eyes of children," the first lady said Monday at the first of a month's worth of holiday receptions.

"Magic, Wonder and Joy" is the theme this year, President Joe Biden's third in the White House.

Jill Biden said it was "so amazing" to see the Christmas tree atop the entrance to the East Wing when they returned Sunday night after spending the Thanksgiving holiday in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

"When Joe and I saw that last night, we were just, like, mesmerized," she said. The whimsical set of oversized decorations is meant to inspire the feelings of awe and wonder that put children on joyful edge during the holidays, White House aides said.

Throughout two public floors

of the White House, the décor features several nods to the 200th anniversary of the publication of the poem and book commonly known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas." (The official title is "A Visit from St. Nicholas.") The papier mache reindeer suspended in the foyer are "so cool," she said. "It's like they're leaping from the storybook's pages. I don't know how you feel about it. I feel it's just breathtaking." The Library of Congress provided samples of editions of the book from the past 200 years that are on display in protective cases along the ground floor corridor. The traditional gingerbread White House includes a large sugar cookie replica of the book opened to a page that says "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night." Santa's sleigh and reindeer also fly above the cookie White

House. National Guard families, who joined the first lady as part of her Joining Forces initiative to support military families, were among the first members of the public to see the decorations. Children of these and other military families were also being treated to a performance by the cast of the North American tour of the Disney musical "Frozen."

One of the first Christmas trees visitors see after entering the White House is decorated with wooden gold star ornaments engraved with the names of fallen service members. The official White House Christmas tree, an 18.5-foot-tall (5.6-meter-tall) Fraser fir, stands in its usual place in the Blue Room. The massive tree highlights cheerful scenes, landscapes and neighborhoods from across the country. A toy train runs around its base. □

Failed wheel bearing caused Kentucky train derailment but didn't trigger alarms beforehand, CSX says

Associated Press

LIVINGSTON, Ky. (AP) — A failed wheel bearing on a train car caused a derailment that sparked a chemical fire and forced residents of a small town in Kentucky out of their homes for just over a day, including most of Thanksgiving, according to CSX railroad.

The accident happened Wednesday afternoon just north of Livingston. A spokesman for the railroad said Monday that crews were able to restore the tracks over the weekend and trains resumed running through the area before midday Sunday. All 16 railcars involved in the derailment have been removed from the site, and crews removed the spilled chemical and 2,500 tons of impacted soil and replaced it with clean material, CSX said.

The CSX train derailed around 2:30 p.m. near the remote town with about 200 people in Rockcastle County. Residents were encouraged to evacuate just a day before the Thanksgiving holiday before being cleared to return to their homes late Thursday afternoon.

Two of the 16 cars that derailed carried molten sulfur, which caught fire after the cars were breached. No



Rail operator CSX says that a chemical fire at a Kentucky train derailment that caused evacuations has been extinguished and residents can return to their homes. (Nov.23)

Associated Press

other hazardous materials were released. A spokesman for the Federal Railroad Administration said the investigation is ongoing and the agency doesn't typically release any preliminary findings.

State officials monitored the air after the derailment for traces of hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide, but there had been no detection of those substances at the derailment site or the nearby town of Livingston since Thursday morning. The fire was extinguished at the site just after noon on Thurs-

day, and officials said that it was safe for residents to return home. The railroad's Bryan Tucker said no sulfur dioxide had been detected in the area since the fire was put out.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency website, sulfur dioxide can cause respiratory problems, depending on the concentration and length of exposure.

Tucker said the bearing that failed didn't get hot enough to trigger an alarm from the last one of the railroad's trackside detectors that the

train passed, so the crew didn't get any warning before the derailment.

Those trackside detectors that railroads rely on to help spot defects before they can cause derailments received a lot of attention earlier this year after an overheating wheel bearing caused a fiery derailment on a different railroad in eastern Ohio in February. In that Norfolk Southern derailment, the crew did get a warning but it didn't come soon enough for them to be able to stop the train before it derailed in East Palestine.

That derailment and several others since put the spotlight on railroad safety nationwide, but the reforms proposed afterward have largely stalled in Congress, and regulators have also made little progress.

CSX said it was thankful to Rockcastle County authorities who helped respond to the incident and to community members and local businesses that helped affected residents and assisted the company in serving Thanksgiving dinners for the community.

"CSX apologizes for the inconvenience this incident caused the local community and is appreciative for everyone's patience throughout the recovery effort," the railroad said in a statement. CSX worked with two local restaurants to provide a Thanksgiving meal at a local church around midday Thursday and delivered holiday meals to the people working at a middle school shelter for residents. The railroad also provided any necessary supplies from a Dollar Tree store in the area free of cost.

Tucker said that about 400 people have applied for reimbursement so far from the railroad for costs related to the derailment. □

University of North Carolina shooting suspect found unfit for trial, sent to mental health facility

By Hannah Schoenbaum

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The University of North Carolina graduate student charged with fatally shooting his faculty adviser has been found unfit for trial after two mental evaluations, a judge ruled Monday. Tailei Qi, 34, is accused of killing associate professor Zijie Yan in a science building at the state's flagship public university on Aug. 28. He is being held without bond on charges of first-degree murder and misdemeanor possession of a firearm on educational property. Orange County Superior Court Judge Alyson

Grine said Monday that two separate mental evaluations found Qi likely suffers from untreated schizophrenia.

"Qi demonstrated delusional thinking, experienced auditory hallucinations, engaged in self-harm in the detention center, showed fragmented thought processes that impeded his communication," she said. Severe mental illness has rendered him unable to comprehend his situation, assist in his legal defense and understand court proceedings, even with a Mandarin interpreter present, Grine said. She ruled Monday that Qi will be committed to Central Regional Hospital

in Butner for psychological treatment. Doctors will be required to notify the Orange County district attorney if his condition improves.

An hours-long campus lockdown and police manhunt that resulted in Qi's arrest frightened students and faculty who had just returned to campus for the start of the fall semester. Chapel Hill police arrested Qi without force in a residential neighborhood near campus within two hours of the attack, UNC Police Chief Brian James said. The campus locked down again two weeks later after police received a 911 call that someone had brand-



Law enforcement respond to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill campus in Chapel Hill, N.C., Aug. 28, 2023, after the university locked down and warned of an armed person on campus.

(AP Photo/Hannah Schoenbaum, File)

dished a weapon in the student union. □

Woman's decades-old mosaic of yard rocks and decorative art work may have to go

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Iris Logan was having a hard time growing grass in the front yard of her St. Paul, Minnesota, home, so she covered the space with stones, statues and decorative art. More than 30 years later, it's something of a local landmark.

But to a city inspector, it's a nuisance. Logan, 70, has been given notice to clean up the "planters, wood, metal cans, large rocks and miscellaneous debris" cited after a recent inspection, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. The City Council will take up the matter Dec. 6. Logan says the city's actions forced her to create the mosaic in the first place because workers on a road repair project dug so deep around one of her trees that its roots were exposed. She brought in bricks and dirt, planted flowers and added stones — and just kept adding.

"I'm a rock lover," said Logan, a former cotton sharecropper from Mississippi.



Iris Logan takes a break from dismantling her boulevard rock garden in front of her Sherburne Ave. home in St. Paul, Minn., on Friday, Nov. 24, 2023.

(John Autey/Pioneer Press via AP)

"I'm not going to lie. If I see a rock I like, I try and roll it in my car on a two-by-four." Logan recently received written notice that a city official will recommend to the City Council that she be given until Dec. 22 to clean things up. She appealed the order in care-

ful handwriting that filled six pages of a short spiral notebook. The stones don't extend into the street or impede plow trucks or other city vehicles, Logan wrote in addressing one of the inspector's concerns.

"I just want to make a stand for the next person,"

said Logan, interrupted by a supportive honk and wave from a neighbor driving by.

Casey Rodriguez, a spokesman for the St. Paul Department of Safety and Inspections, said about 16 other properties on the same avenue also received letters

advising them to remove obstructions to comply with city code.

"Generally boulevards should be clear of installations or obstructions (benches, large rocks, etc.) that would impede access to buried utility lines. This also keeps the tree roots clear and provides a place to shovel snow in the winter," Rodriguez said in an email to the Pioneer Press. Earlier this month, a petition supporting Logan drew 150 signatures "in just a few hours," according to a written statement from Justin Lewandowski, a community organizer who lives near Logan. He's hopeful the council will soon clarify rules about portable planters.

"The quick support from our neighbors has been a clear signal of how much this art means to our community," Lewandowski said. "It's not just about aesthetics; it's about our identity and how we, as residents, engage with each other and with city policy." □

New incentives could boost satisfaction with in-person work, but few employers are making changes



People work at the Yelp office in San Francisco on Feb. 14, 2023. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)

By Wyatt Grantham-Philips
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Justin Ryan Horton has two jobs. When he's not putting in 24-hour shifts as a firefighter, the 22-year-old is working as an administrative assistant for a local community college from his home in Colorado Springs.

Firefighting is, of course, not a work-from-home kind of job. So when the community college position gave Horton the choice to clock in remotely, he took it.

"I'm gone a lot being a firefighter," Horton said. "Instead of coming home and then seeing my family for a few minutes before leav-

ing to go to my other job... I feel like I have just more time with (them) when I work from home."

The COVID-19 pandemic upended what working looks like for millions of people all around the world. While many jobs can only be done in person, swaths of employers shuttered their physical doors and moved their workplaces increasingly online.

Workers have since begun to return to the office in waves, at least for part of the week, and navigating that transition is an ongoing and significant hurdle for employers and workers alike. And many simply cannot fathom a return to the pre-COVID status quo, changing how companies approach their staffing needs. Retaining employees who don't want to

work in person is an issue for companies, but relatively few employers (13%) have introduced new incentives that would make employees more satisfied with it, according to a newly released poll conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago.

About 3 in 4 human resources representatives say that retaining employees who don't want to work in the office is a problem — including 19% who call it a "major problem." Another 54% of HR representatives call it a minor problem. And only about one-third of HR professionals say employees at their workplace are "extremely" or "very" happy about returning to the workplace. "Once workers discovered that (remote work could be) less expensive and... make their life a

little easier, they just wanted to keep doing it, even once the pandemic began fading away," Marjorie Connelly, senior fellow with NORC's Public Affairs & Media Research department, told The Associated Press.

In both the HR survey and a separate poll of U.S. adults, researchers found that the top factors behind employees' desire to work from home include their prioritization of flexibility and work-life balance. Other HR representatives and employees who work from home cite the length and costs of commuting as key. Those are some of the main reasons that Megan Homis, 33, prefers remote work. As a senior account executive for an advertising and marketing firm in Southern California, Homis goes into the office once a month. □

6 teenagers go on trial for their alleged role in the 2020 beheading of a French teacher

PARIS (AP) — Six teenagers go on trial Monday in Paris for their alleged roles in the beheading of a teacher who showed caricatures of the prophet of Islam to his class, a killing that led authorities to reaffirm France's cherished rights of expression and secularism. Samuel Paty, a history and geography teacher, was killed on Oct. 16, 2020, near his school in a northwest Paris suburb by an 18-year-old of Chechen origin who had become radicalized. The attacker was in turn shot dead by police. Paty's name was disclosed on social media after a class debate on free expression during which he showed caricatures published by the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which triggered a news-room massacre by extremists in January 2015. All hearings at a Paris juvenile court are to be held behind closed doors in accordance with French law regarding minors. The defendants arrived Monday morning at the



French President Emmanuel Macron leaves after paying his respects by the coffin of slain teacher Samuel Paty in the courtyard of the Sorbonne university during a national memorial event, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020 in Paris.

Paris court, their faces hidden behind masks and hoods, accompanied by their families. The media are not allowed to disclose their identity. Among those going on trial, a teenage girl, who was 13 at the time, is accused

of making false allegations for wrongly saying that Paty had asked Muslim students to raise their hands and leave the classroom before he showed the cartoons. She later told investigators she had lied. She was not in the classroom that day and

(AP Photo/Francois Mori, Pool)

Paty did not make such a request, the investigation has shown. Five other students of Paty's school, then 14 and 15, are facing charges of criminal conspiracy with the aim of preparing aggravated violence to be committed.

They are accused of having waited for Paty for several hours until he left the school and of having identified him to the killer in exchange for promises of payments of 300-350 euros (\$348-\$406).

The investigation established that the attacker knew the name of the teacher and the address of his school, but he did not have the means to identify him.

The lawyer for one of the defendants, Antoine Ory, said his client is "tormented by remorse and very much afraid of the confrontation with Mr. Paty's family." He said the teenager "obviously didn't know about the criminal plan" of the killer, Abdoullakh Anzorov, a Moscow-born Chechen refugee.

Ory said his client since then had "difficult" times, changed school and friends and now sees the trial as an opportunity to turn the page.

All six teenagers are facing 2 1/2-year in prison. □

Israel and Hamas agree to extend truce for two more days, and to free more hostages and prisoners

By Tia Goldberg, Jack Jeffery and Sammy Magdy
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their cease-fire for two more days past Monday, the Qatari government said, raising the prospect of a longer halt to their deadliest and most destructive war and further exchanges of militant-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

The announcement, made by Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majid Al Ansary in a post on X, came on the final day of the original four-day truce between the warring sides. A fourth swap of hostages for prisoners under that deal was expected later

Monday.

Israel has said it would extend the cease-fire by one day for every 10 additional hostages released. After the

announcement by Qatar a key mediator in the conflict, along with the United States and Egypt Hamas confirmed it had agreed to a two-day



Palestinians walk in Gaza City on Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, on the fourth day of the temporary ceasefire between Hamas and Israel.

(AP Photo/Mohammed Hajar)

extension "under the same terms."

But Israel says it remains committed to crushing Hamas' military capabilities and ending its 16-year rule over Gaza after its Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel. That would likely mean expanding a ground offensive from devastated northern Gaza to the south, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have crammed into United Nations shelters, and where dire conditions persist despite the increased delivery of aid under the truce.

Israel will resume its operations with "full force" as soon as the current deal expires if Hamas does not agree to further hostage releases, government

spokesperson Eylon Levy told reporters on Monday. Israel has said that, in addition to dismantling Hamas, freeing the rest of the captives is a top priority. So far, 58 hostages have been released during the current truce, including 39 Israelis. Before the truce, four hostages were freed, another was rescued and two were found dead inside Gaza. Israel has released 117 Palestinians from prison since the truce began.

After weeks of national trauma over the roughly 240 people abducted by Hamas and other militants, scenes of the women and children reuniting with families have rallied Israelis behind calls to return those who remain in captivity. □

Madagascar's main opposition candidate files a lawsuit claiming fraud in the presidential election

By Sarah Tetaud
Associated Press

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP) — The main opposition candidate in Madagascar said Monday he has filed lawsuits with the country's highest court seeking to have the results of this month's national election canceled and incumbent President Andry Rajoelina's victory declared invalid, claiming fraud.

Rajoelina, 49, was announced Saturday as the winner of the Nov. 16 election with 58.95% of the votes, giving him a third term as leader of the Indian Ocean island.

Rajoelina's victory was announced by the national electoral commission but needs to be ratified within nine days by the High Constitutional Court.

The runup to the vote saw protests led by a coalition of opposition candidates



Main opposition party leader Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko arrives to cast his vote at a polling station in the presidential elections in Antananarivo, Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023.

(AP Photo/Alexander Joe)

and the burning of some ballot stations on the eve of election day. Ten of the 12 opposition candidates called for a boycott of the

vote, although their names appeared on ballot papers.

Some Rajoelina supporters have claimed they were

promised money to vote for him.

Main opposition candidate Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko, who received the

second highest number of votes behind Rajoelina with 14.4%, said he filed the appeals with the High Constitutional Court.

He claims the electoral commission "modified" its figures.

Rajoelina, a former radio DJ and mayor of the capital, Antananarivo, first served as president of a transitional government in Madagascar from 2009-2014 following a coup. He was elected in 2019.

He was the only candidate to attend the ceremony announcing the results of the election and sat with 12 empty chairs set aside for the other candidates.

"With me, the Malagasy people have chosen the path of continuity, peace and stability," Rajoelina said. "I thank the Malagasy people for having demonstrated political maturity and wisdom." □

North Korea restores border guard posts as tensions rise over its satellite launch, Seoul says

By Hyung-Jin Kim
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— North Korea is restoring front-line guard posts that it had dismantled during a previous period of inter-Korean rapprochement, South Korea's military said Monday, after animosities spiked between the rivals over the North's recent spy satellite launch.

The two Koreas previously dismantled or disarmed 11 of their guard posts inside their heavily fortified border, called the Demilitarized Zone, under a 2018 deal meant to ease front-line military confrontations. But the deal is now in danger of being scrapped as both Koreas openly threaten to breach it.

The 2018 agreement required the two Koreas to halt aerial surveillance and live-fire exercises at no-fly and buffer zones that they

established along the DMZ, as well as remove some of their front-line guard posts and land mines. The deal left South Korea with 50 board guard posts and North Korea with 150.

After North Korea claimed to place its first military spy satellite into orbit on Nov. 21, South Korea said it would partially suspend the deal and resume aerial surveillance along the DMZ in response. South Korea said its response was "a minimum defensive measure" because the launch showed the North's intentions to strengthen its monitoring of the South and improve its missile technology. North Korea immediately slammed South Korea's decision, saying it would deploy powerful weapons at the border in a tit-for-tat measure. The North said it also won't abide by the 2018 deal any longer.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement Monday that it detected North Korea building guard posts at border sites where its dismantled guard posts once stood, and that North Korea deployed troops and heavy weapons there. The ministry distributed to media outlets photos of North Korean soldiers building a guard post and moving a suspected recoilless rifle to a newly built trench. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol ordered the military to keep a close watch on the North and maintain a firm readiness, according to his office. The South Korean Defense Ministry later said it's ready to "promptly and strongly punish" North Korea over any provocation that it launches.

South Korea, the United States and others strongly condemned the North's

satellite launch, which they viewed as a provocation that threatens regional peace. United Nations Security Council resolutions ban any satellite launches by North Korea because the world body regards

them as covers for testing its long-range missile technology.

North Korea says it has sovereign rights to launch spy satellites to cope with what it says are escalating U.S.-led military threats. □



In this undated photo provided and released on Nov. 27, 2023, by South Korea Defense Ministry, North Korean soldiers install their guard post in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in North Korea. (South Korea Defense Ministry via AP)

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly

visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history. Nicolaas Store built in 1940

and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaux of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barber-shop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment. Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly



beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals

are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □

Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Playa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. These Ambassadors were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years

consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors Mr. William & Mrs. Angela McDermott from Florida, United States

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Playa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the Emerald Ambassador certificate to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:
Aruba's warm and friendly people always treat them like family
Aruba's nice sandy beaches
Aruba's year-round sunny weather
"Spending time with family and friends"

"Aruba's variety of restaurants – they are all great!"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Caribbean Palm Village!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors & Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. This tremendous group of honorees were honored with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitor Mrs. Jay Yerema Weafer from Ontario, Canada, Distinguished Visitor Mrs. Susan Yerema from Ontario, Canada, Emerald Ambassador Mrs. Joan Yerema from Ontario, Canada, Emerald Ambassadors Mr. Heritage Way & Mrs. Dianne Thibert from Ontario, Canada, Emerald Ambassadors Mr. Carl & Mrs. Barbara Johantges from Florida, United States and Emerald Ambassadors Mr. Ron & Mrs. Suzanne Singleton from Florida, United States. Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Caribbean Palm Village bestowed the certificates to all the honorees,



presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mrs. Jay Yerema Weafer were:

"Spending time with family and friends"
Aruba's sun, warm weather, and Tradewinds

Aruba's food
Aruba's drinking water
Aruba's warm and friendly people

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mrs. Susan Weafer were:

Aruba's people
Aruba's variety of restaurants to choose from
Aruba's atmosphere
Aruba's nice consistent weather
Aruba's safety

Aruba's beaches
Aruba's warm consistent weather all year round
Aruba's food
Aruba's nice and friendly people

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mr. Carl & Mrs. Barbara were:
Aruba is our home away from home"

Aruba's turquoise beaches
Aruba's Tradewinds
Aruba's friendly people
Aruba's safety

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mrs. Joan were:

Aruba's warm and friendly people
"Spending time with family and friends"
Aruba's variety of restaurants to choose from
Aruba's nice consistent weather

"Aruba is my home away from home"

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mr. Heritage & Mrs. Dianne were:
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Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are

being used for decoration, hand-crafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

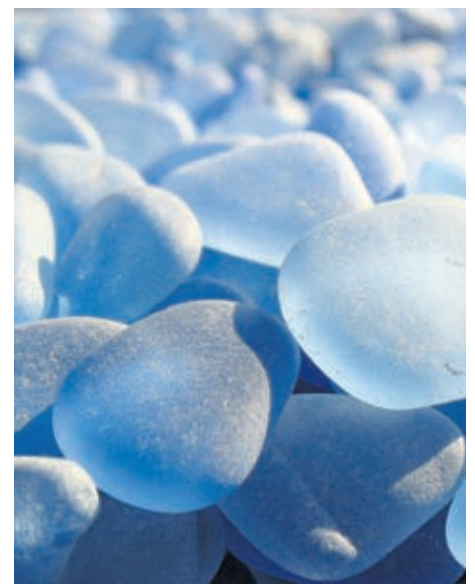


Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day! Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! ☐



Episode 79 - Shamans botanic

Authentic Shamans are given the blessing and ability to modify the real world or the collective perception of it according to their own believes and responds to a kind of causal logic. This can finally be expressed, for example, in the ability to heal, to communicate with ancestral spirits and to interpret visionary divinations through some catalyst. The term comes from the noun in the Tungu language (from Siberia) shaman ('he who knows'), and this from the verb shahia ('to know').

Due to the heterogeneity

of language and culture, it becomes a challenge when one has to characterize a single indigenous "shamanism" or "shaman" for the Amerindian groups of the South America lowlands and the Caribbean islands. A wide variety of shamanic specialists have been observed performing rituals and administering substances for beneficial purposes; while an equal number of people are recognized for their potential to cause harm to others. For some, shamanic knowledge is acquired through dreams, without formal

learning, and all people share a bit of shamanic power. Others have formal apprenticeships with teachers. Aboriginal tribes of the Caribbean, Central and South America, including the Caquetio groups of our islands, used to ground the seeds of a plant called *Anadenanthera peregrina* for its' essential hallucinogenic properties. These seeds together with other herbs and snails shells as bonding agent where grinded together and the mixture was added into a container for its elaboration by cooking the cocktail over a fire. This yopo is a natural entheogen medicine whose origin and first uses is found in the Venezuelan and Brazilian Amazon.

It is prepared as mentioned with the ground seed of the plant *Anadenanthera peregrina*, which through a process of mixing with other ashes and seeds of plants produces small slabs or black, brown or white colored cakes which are then ground into a fine magic powder before being inhaled or blown into the nostrils of the companion, either as a remedy or

for spiritual trance. This is called hechura by the Yanomamis of the Amazon region. *Anadenanthera peregrina* is better known by its regional Amerindian names like yopo, jopo, cohoba, parica or calcium tree and is a perennial tree native to the Caribbean and South America.

Ayahuasca or yage, a fashionable substance, is a hallucinogenic drink traditionally prepared by shamans of various indigenous tribes in the Amazon area. It is made from the *Psychotria viridis*, a vain properly ayahuasca or chacruna

banisteriopsis, which contains dimethyltryptamine or DMT, a psychoactive substance.

For those who are familiar with plants and entheogen substances or ancestral medicines, the effect of the yopo is like the fusion of ayahuasca and bufo alvarius, meaning that it produces a cleansing of spiritual and a revitalization effect of consciousness. On the one hand it is a hard confrontation with the ego, and on the other hand it offers the communal sense of unity.

Other American shamanic plants containing hallucinogenic properties are the Peyote cactus *Lophophora williamsii* and the Peruvian San Pedro cactus *Echinopsis pachanoi*. Beside hallucinogenic quality of the San Pedro and the Peyote, they have many other uses in folkloric medicine in the South Western United States and Northern Mexico. Like for influenza, intestinal disorders, diabetes, the treatment of arthritis, consumption, snake and scorpion bites.

To get to know a little bit more regarding Aruba and its cultural origins we highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session. A mind opening revelation and entertaining island experience is awaiting you. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com, our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about...?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban



artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism 10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Turtuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also

a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreu di tera (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dornasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word “florin” supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word “florino”, both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

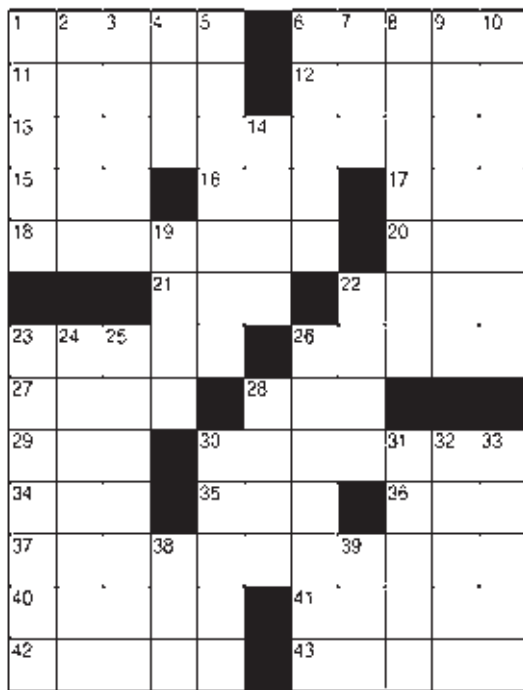
ACROSS

- 1 Improvises in jazz
- 6 Horse's cousin
- 11 Blockhead
- 12 Fairy tale monsters
- 13 Poplar trees
- 15 Museum focus
- 16 King of France
- 17 Have debts
- 18 Put in other words
- 20 Clamor
- 21 Wisdom bringer
- 22 Let off steam
- 23 Soup server
- 26 Takes the bus
- 27 Lotion additive
- 28 "The Raven" writer
- 29 Yang's counterpart
- 30 Dangerous apps
- 34 Lincoln nickname
- 35 Angled pipe
- 36 Sheep sound

- 37 Breakfast appliances
- 40 In the vicinity
- 41 Prod into action
- 42 Stories
- 43 Spirited horse

DOWN

- 1 Parish leader
- 2 Find darling
- 3 Catchers' needs
- 4 Cooking vessel
- 5 Closet use
- 6 "Holy moly!"
- 7 Sense of self
- 8 Was in a funk
- 9 Merlot, e.g.
- 10 Concurs
- 14 Jot down
- 19 Story
- 22 Look upon
- 23 Purchase plan
- 24 Cave raider of story
- 25 Doomed
- 26 Jazz saxophonist
- 28 Washed out
- 30 Thaws
- 31 Dwelling
- 32 Mountain group
- 33 Moved slowly
- 38 Merriment
- 39 Deep groove



11-28

AXYDI.BAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

XPKKDOHGG DG YXHO YXPZ
LRA ZXDOJ, YXPZ LRA GPL,
POU YXPZ LRA UR PEH DO
X PETROL. — T P X P Z T P
WPOUXD

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY, YOU CAN TEACH SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY. MARTHA STEWART



Yesterday's answer

Google will start deleting 'inactive' accounts in December. Here's what you need to know

By Wyattte Grantham-Phillips
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Have a Google account you haven't used in a while? If you want to keep it from disappearing, you should sign in before the end of the week.

Under Google's updated inactive-account policy, which the tech giant announced back in May, accounts that haven't been used in at least two years could be deleted. Accounts deemed inactive will be erased in a phased-approach beginning Friday. If you have an account that's at risk for deletion, you should receive multiple notices from Google sent to the email affiliated with that account and its recovery address (if one exists). But if you're still catching up on this new



Google logos are shown when searched on Google in New York, Sept. 11, 2023. Google will start deleting 'inactive' accounts in December.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

policy and want to ensure that your content on Google Drive, Docs, Gmail and more is saved here's what you need to know. Why is google deleting inactive accounts? In May's announcement, Google attributed its inactive-account update to security issues.

Accounts that haven't been used for a long time are more likely to be compromised, the company said, noting that "forgotten or unattended accounts" typically have old passwords, often lack two-factor authentication and receive fewer security checks. □

Cyber Monday marks the year's biggest online shopping day, and one more chance to save on gifts



In this Monday, Nov. 29, 2010, file photo, a consumer looks at Cyber Monday sales on her computer at her home in Palo Alto, Calif.

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

By Haleluya Hadero
Associated Press

(AP) - Consumers are scouring the internet for online deals as they begin to cap off the five-day post-Thanksgiving shopping bonanza with Cyber Monday.

Even though e-commerce is now part and parcel of our everyday lives and much of the holiday shopping season, Cyber Monday - a term coined back in 2005 by the National Retail Federation - continues to be the biggest online shopping day of the year, thanks to the deals and the hype the industry has created to fuel it. Adobe Analytics, which tracks online shopping, expects consumers to spend between \$12.0 billion and \$12.4 billion on Monday, making it the biggest online shopping day of all time. □

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New incentives could boost satisfaction with in-person work, but few employers are making changes

**By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer
NEW YORK (AP)** — The COVID-19 pandemic upended what working looks like for millions of people all around the world. While many jobs can only be done in person, swaths of employers shuttered their physical doors and moved their workplaces increasingly online.

Workers have since begun to return to the office in waves, at least for part of the week, and navigating that transition is an ongoing and significant hurdle for employers and workers alike. And many simply cannot fathom a return to the pre-COVID status quo, changing how companies approach their staffing needs.

Retaining employees who don't want to work in person is an issue for companies, but relatively few employers (13%) have introduced new incentives that would make employees more satisfied with it, according to a newly released poll conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago.

About 3 in 4 human resources representatives say that retaining employees who don't want to work in the office is a problem including 19% who call it a "major problem." Another



File - People work at the Yelp office in San Francisco on Feb. 14, 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic upended the work habits of people around the world, with millions working from home, at least for part of their week. Workers have returned in waves back to the office on some days, but navigating that transition is a significant hurdle for employers and workers alike.

(AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)

54% of HR representatives call it a minor problem. And only about one-third of HR professionals say employees at their workplace are "extremely" or "very" happy about returning to the workplace.

"Once workers discovered that (remote work could be) less expensive and... make their life a little easier, they just wanted to keep doing it, even once the pandemic began fading away," Marjorie Connelly, senior fellow with NORC's Public Affairs & Media Research department, told The Associated Press.

In both the HR survey and a separate poll of U.S. adults, researchers found

costs of commuting as key. There are some initiatives that could incentivize more employees to work in-person or at least increase their satisfaction about already going into the office the poll shows. Most hybrid workers (55%) say paying employees more for their in-office work would provide "a lot" of encouragement for them to work in-person more often. □

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Irish writer Paul Lynch wins Booker Prize with dystopian novel 'Prophet Song'

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Irish writer Paul Lynch won the Booker Prize for fiction on Sunday with what judges called a "soul-shattering" novel about a woman's struggle to protect her family as Ireland collapses into totalitarianism and war.

"Prophet Song," set in a dystopian fictional version of Dublin, was awarded the 50,000-pound (\$63,000) literary prize at a ceremony in London. Canadian writer Esi Edugyan, who chaired the judging panel, said the book is "a triumph of emotional storytelling, bracing and brave" in which Lynch "pulls off feats of language that are stunning to witness."

Lynch, 46, had been the bookies' favorite to win the prestigious prize, which usually brings a big boost in sales. His book beat five other finalists from Ireland, the U.K., the U.S. and Canada, chosen from 163 novels submitted by publishers.

"This was not an easy book to write," Lynch said after being handed the Booker trophy.

"The rational part of me believed I was dooming my career by writing this novel, though I had to write the book anyway. We do not have a choice in such matters."

Lynch has called "Prophet Song," his fifth novel, an



1: Paul Lynch, Winner of the 2023 Booker Prize celebrates shortly after the announcement in London, Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023. The Booker Prize is awarded to the best sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK and Ireland, in the opinion of the judges. Lynch won with his book 'Prophet Song', a dystopian vision of Ireland in the grips of totalitarianism.
(AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali)

attempt at "radical empathy" that tries to plunge readers into the experience of living in a collapsing society.

"I was trying to see into the modern chaos," he told the Booker website. "The unrest in Western democracies. The problem of Syria the implosion of an entire nation, the scale of its refugee crisis and the West's indifference I wanted to deepen the reader's immersion to such a degree that by the end of the book, they would not just know, but feel this problem for themselves."

The five prize judges met to pick the winner on Saturday, less than 48 hours after far-right violence erupted in Dublin following a stabbing attack on a group of children. Edugyan said that immediate events didn't directly influence the choice of winner.

Lynch said he was "astounded" by the riots "and at the same time I recognized the truth that this kind of energy is always there under the surface."

He said "Prophet Song" written over four years starting in 2018 "is a counterfactual novel.

It's not a prophetic statement."

"I wrote the book to articulate the message that the things that are happening in this book are occurring timelessly throughout the ages and maybe we need to deepen our own responses to that," he told reporters.

The other finalists were Irish writer Paul Murray's "The Bee Sting;" American novelist Paul Harding's "This Other Eden;" Canadian author Sarah Bernstein's "Study for Obedience;" U.S. writer Jonathan Escoffery's "If I Survive You;" and British author Chetna Maroo's

wan, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie and Hilary Mantel.

Four Irish novelists and one from Northern Ireland have previously won the prize.

"It is with immense pleasure that I bring the Booker home to Ireland," Lynch said. Asked what he planned to do with the prize money, he said it would help him make payments on his tracker mortgage, which have soared along with inflation.

Lynch received his trophy from last year's winner, Sri Lankan author Shehan Karunatilaka, during a ceremony at Old Billingsgate, a grand former Victorian fish market in central London.

The evening included a speech from Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British-Iranian woman who was jailed in Tehran for almost six years until 2022 on allegations of plotting the overthrow of Iran's government a charge that she, her sup-



2: From top, the books "Study for Obedience", "Western Lane", "This Other Eden", "If I Survive You", "Prophet Song" and "The Bee Sting" are displayed during a photocall for the Booker Prize 2023, in London, Thursday, Nov. 23, 2023 ahead of the award ceremony on Nov. 26 in London.
(AP Photo/Kin Cheung)



3: From left, Irish author Paul Lynch, British author Chetna Maroo, American author Jonathan Escoffery, Canadian author Sarah Bernstein, Irish author Paul Murray and American author Paul Harding pose with their books during a photocall for the Booker Prize 2023, in London, Thursday, Nov. 23, 2023 ahead of the award ceremony on Nov. 26 in London.
(AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

judges' meeting wasn't acrimonious. "We all ultimately felt that this was the book that we wanted to present to the world and that this was truly a masterful work of fiction," she said. Founded in 1969, the Booker Prize is open to English-language novels from any country published in the U.K. and Ireland. and has a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Previous winners include Ian McE-

porters and rights groups denied.

She talked about the books that sustained her in prison, recalling how inmates ran an underground library and circulated copies of Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale," set in an oppressive American theocracy.

"Books helped me to take refuge into the world of others when I was incapable of making one of my own," Zaghari-Ratcliffe said. □

IndyCar champ Palou admits breach of contract as Spaniard tries to mitigate damages owed to McLaren

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

Two-time IndyCar champion Alex Palou concedes in court documents that he breached his contract with McLaren Racing when the Spaniard did an about-face and stayed at Chip Ganassi Racing.

The admission came in Palou's response to a lawsuit filed against him by McLaren in September seeking to recoup at least \$23 million in losses the team calculated Palou's reversal cost the organization. Palou's 20-page response was filed in the High Court of Justice Business and Property Courts of England and Wales Commercial Court. The Associated Press reviewed the filing Monday.

In the response, Palou says he changed his mind about joining McLaren ahead of the 2024 season when he "lost trust and confidence that (McLaren) genuinely intended to support his ambition to race in the Formula One Series and decided to continue racing with CGR in the Indy Car Series instead."



FILE - Alex Palou, of Spain, prepares to drive during practice for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis, Friday, May 19, 2023. Two-time IndyCar champion Alex Palou admits he breached his contract with McLaren Racing when the Spaniard did an about-face and stayed at Chip Ganassi Racing. The admission came in Palou's response to a lawsuit filed against him by McLaren in September seeking to recoup at least \$23 million in losses the team calculated Palou's reversal cost the organization.

(AP Photo/Michael Conroy, File)

Palou "therefore admits that he renounced his contractual obligations" with McLaren and "the real issue between the parties is as to the quantum of any damages which the Defendants are liable to pay,"

the documents say. The spat over the 26-year-old between two IndyCar teams began when Palou initially disputed a Ganassi claim that the team had picked up the 2023 option year on his contract.

McLaren in July 2022 said it had signed Palou and had him earmarked for an IndyCar seat and a reserve driver role with its Formula One team. Chip Ganassi Racing said it had the contractual rights for Palou for the 2023

season.

Palou and Ganassi entered mediation and a resolution was reached a year ago in which Palou would drive for Ganassi in 2023 but was also McLaren's reserve F1 driver when it did not interfere with IndyCar. He was able to participate in a practice session, tested for the F1 team both on track and in a simulator, and was the reserve driver for McLaren at F1's Miami Grand Prix in May.

McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown was contacted Aug. 8 and told by attorneys for Palou that Palou would not be joining McLaren and had instead signed a three-year extension with Ganassi. Palou won the 2021 and 2023 championships with Ganassi and is now signed there through 2026.

IndyCar driver Pato O'Ward last week was named Palou's replacement as McLaren's F1 reserve driver and participated in a practice session during the season-ending race weekend in Abu Dhabi.

O'Ward is a full-time IndyCar driver for Arrow McLaren Racing. □

Paris mayor says she's quitting Elon Musk's 'global sewer' platform X as city gears up for Olympics



FILE - Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo delivers her speech during a political meeting with the French Employers' association (MEDEF) at the Station F startup campus, in Paris, France, Monday, Feb. 21, 2022. The mayor of future Olympic host city Paris says she is quitting X, accusing Elon Musk's platform previously known as Twitter of spreading disinformation and hatred and of becoming a "gigantic global sewer" that is toxic for democracy and constructive debate.

(AP Photo/Michel Euler, File)

PARIS (AP) — The mayor of future Olympic host city Paris says she is quitting X, accusing Elon Musk's platform previously known as Twitter of spreading disinformation and hatred and of becoming a "gigantic global sewer" that is toxic for democracy and constructive debate.

"With its thousands of anonymous accounts and its troll farms, life on Twitter is the exact opposite of democratic life," Mayor Anne Hidalgo said in a long post titled, "Why I am leaving Twitter."

"I refuse to endorse this evil scheme," she wrote.

An Associated Press request for comment emailed to X

got an automated reply, "Busy now, please check back later." Hidalgo's office said posts on Monday in French and English that announced her departure from X would be the Socialist mayor's last and that she will then close her account which has 1.5 million followers at the end of the week. Her office said that Paris City Hall is keeping its own separate account on X. Hidalgo's withdrawal from X follows a fractious period for the mayor. She has faced criticism from political opponents over the expense and need for a trip she made in October to the French South Pacific territories of New Caledonia and

Tahiti. The Olympic surfing competition next July is being held on Tahiti's world-famous Teahupo'o wave. She also locked horns last week with government ministers over the French capital's readiness for the 2024 Summer Games. Hidalgo said some transport options won't be ready for the July 26-Aug. 11 Olympics. Firing back, Transport Minister Clement Beaune said the mayor's comments were a "shameful" attempt to divert attention from her Pacific voyage.

Hidalgo's office said her decision to leave X was not in response to the recent criticism but was thought-out over time. □

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WBC final winner Shōta Imanaga becomes free agent Tuesday, talks can run through Jan. 11

NEW YORK undefined

Shōta Imanaga, who got the win for Japan in this year's World Baseball Classic final against the United States, will become a free agent Tuesday and major league teams can sign him through 5 p.m. on Jan. 11. Naoyuki Uwasawa, a 29-year-old right-handed reliever with the Pacific League's Nippon Ham Fighters, also will become a free agent Tuesday and be available through Jan. 11. Imanaga, a 30-year-old left-hander, was 7-4 with a 2.80 ERA in 22 starts this year for the Yokohama BayStars of Japan's Central League. He struck out 174 and walked 24 in 148 innings. Imanaga, recognizable for throwback style high socks, became the second prominent Japanese pitcher on the free agent market af-



FILE - Japan pitcher Shota Imanaga throws during first inning of a World Baseball Classic championship game against the United States, Tuesday, March 21, 2023, in Miami. Imanaga, who got the win for Japan in this year's World Baseball Classic final against the United States, will become a free agent Tuesday, Nov. 28, and major league teams can sign him through 5 p.m. on Jan. 11.

(AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee, File)

ter 25-year-old right-hander Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who can sign through Jan. 4.

Imanaga is 64-50 with a 3.18 ERA in eight season with Yokohama, striking out 1,021 and walking 280 in 1,002 2/3 innings.

His fastball averaged 93.5 mph in the WBC final, when he allowed one run and four hits in two innings, giving up a home run to Trea Turner.

Uwasawa was 9-9 with a 2.96 ERA in 24 relief appearances this year.

Under the MLB-NPB agreement, the posting fee will be 20% of the first \$25 million of a major league contract, including earned bonuses and options. The percentage drops to 17.5% of the next \$25 million and 15% of any amount over \$50 million. □

Chiefs finally play clean game as offense comes alive in second half against Raiders

By **DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Perhaps the Kansas City Chiefs finally solved their second-half woes against the Raiders on Sunday in Las Vegas.

Or maybe they just did what Andy Reid has been imploring them to do for the past month.

Despite falling behind by two touchdowns early, the Chiefs were able to rally for a 31-17 win largely because they committed just four penalties and were turnover-free for the first time since Week 5 and the second time all season. The result was an offense led

by Patrick Mahomes that started to resemble their high-scoring teams of the past five years. "We've shown that we can move the ball," Mahomes



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) celebrates after an NFL football game against the Las Vegas Raiders, Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023, in Las Vegas.

(AP Photo/David Becker)

said, "but penalties and drops, and me not getting to the right guy at the right time (were problems). ... Little things have kind of stalled our drives, but we got to it."

Kind of went back to fundamentals this week, and we kept pressing and pushing, and we're going to try to keep going the rest of the season."

While the offense finally came online, the defense continued to do its thing. Steve Spagnuolo's bunch only allowed a field goal after those two early touchdowns, keeping intact its streak of allowing 24 points or fewer in every game.

"We knew our defense would do a good job of maintaining and keeping us around," Mahomes said. The Chiefs still have not put a complete game together since Week 3 against Chicago, but the fact that their offense ended a three-week streak of second-half shutouts was a step in the right direction.

And making it even more impressive is the fact that Kansas City turned things around on a short week after an emotional Monday night loss to Philadelphia in their Super Bowl rematch while on the road against a divisional rival with a holiday thrown into the mix. □